

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1732

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT IS US

SUBJ: ALLON'S WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE ISRAELI POLITICAL SCENE, ON THE EVE OF FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON, IS FOCUSED ON THE INTERNAL LABOR ALIGNMENT DEBATE ON THE END OF WAR FORMULA, EFFORTS TO STABILIZE RABIN'S DOMESTIC STANDING, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW LABOR PARTY LEADERSHIP FORUM, AND SHARP CRITICISM OF PLANNED U.S. ARMS SALES TO EGYPT AND OTHER ARAB STATES. SEEHAN'S FOREIGN POLICY ARTICLE, CURRENTLY BEING SERIALIZED IN MASS CIRCULATION MAARIV, HAS ATTRACTED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION WITHOUT HOWEVER AFFECTING THE ALIGNMENT OF FORCES ON NEGOTIATING ISSUES.
END SUMMARY

1. END OF WAR FORMULA. RABIN TOLD THE CABINET MARCH 7 THAT FURTHER DISCUSSION ON THE END OF WAR FORMULA WOULD BE DEFERRED UNTIL ALLON'S RETURN FROM WASHINGTON, AND IT IS NOW EXPECTED THAT ALLON WILL BRIEF THE CABINET MARCH 14 ON WASHINGTON TALKS. MEANWHILE, IN CONTINUED LABOR DEBATE ON THE END OF WAR FORMULA (DETAILED REPORT FOLLOWS SEPTTEL), MODERATE SUCH AS NAVON AND YARIV AND HARDLINERS SUCH AS HILLEL AND BEN PORAT HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR RESERVATIONS ABOUT FORMULA AND THEIR PREFERENCE FOR A NEXT POLITICAL STEP TOWARD AN OVERALL
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SETTLEMENT, BUT NONE OF THE ALIGNMENT SPEAKERS HAS

CATEGORICALLY SAID HE WOULD VOTE AGAINST SUCH AN AGREEMENT IT ATTAINED. THE LABOR PARTY MODERATES, IN FACT, HAVE SIMPLY REITERATED THEIR 1975 POSITION THAT THE TIME WAS RIPE FOR AN OVERALL ISRAELI SETTLEMENT INITIATIVE. RABIN AND ZADOK HAVE STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE END OF WAR FORMULA, EMPHASIZING THAT IT IN NO WAY DEROGATES FROM THE ISRAELI COMMITMENT TO SEEK FINAL PEACE AGREEMENTS. ZADOK AT MARCH 8 SESSION STRESSED THAT THE END OF WAR APPROACH COULD PROVIDE THE FOUNDATION FOR FINAL SETTLEMENTS WHILE THE ALL OR NOTHING APPROACH COULD ONLY CULMINATE IN DEADLOCK. MAPAM ALSO HAS BACKED THE END OF WAR APPROACH. AT THIS STAGE, WE BELIEVE THAT RABIN HAS THE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO CARRY OUT THE EXPLORATORY PROCESS AS ENBODIED IN THE FEB 22 CABINET DECISION.

2. ON THE DOMESTIC SCOPE, THE MAIN EVENT OF RECENT DAYS HAS BEEN THE RESOLUTION OF THE "ZARMI CRISIS" WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW LABOR PARTY LEADERSHIP FORUM INCLUDING FORMER PM GOLDA MEIR. MEIR'S RETURN HAS BEEN WIDELY CRITICIZED IN THE PRESS AND HAS EVOKED CONCERN IN THE MODERATE CAMP LEST IT MAY STRENGTHEN THE HARDLINERS OPPOSED TO WEST BANK WITHDRAWALS. BUT IT SEEMS LIKELY TO HELP RABIN, AT LEAST IN STABILIZING HIS DOMESTIC POSITION AND IN HOLDING THE PARTY AND ALIGNMENT TOGETHER UNTIL THE CONVENTION LATER THIS YEAR.

3. AS REGARDS ALLON'S DOMESTIC POSITION, IT IS NOT YET CLEAR THAT HIS FAILURE TO BE NAMED TO THE LEADERSHIP FORUM HAS POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. ALLON'S RETURN SHOULD SHED LIGHT ON THIS. HIS CONTINUED EXCLUSION WILL ADD CONSIDERABLY TO STRAIN BETWEEN ALLON AND RABIN AS EVIDENCED INTER ALIA BY PRESS REPORTS THAT FONMIN HAS BEEN DENIED ACCESS TO MINUTES OR RABIN'S WASHINGTON TALKS, AND WILL STRENGTHEN HAND OF HARDLINERS INCLUDING MEIR WHO ARE OPPOSED TO WEST BANK WITHDRAWALS.

4. THE CABINET, THE KNESSET AND THE PRESS ARE ALL PREDICTABLY EXERCISED ABOUT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF OUR INTENTION TO SELL ARMS TO EGYPT WHICH IS SEEN HERE AS FUELING THE ARMS RACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ALLON CAN BE EXPECTED TO HARP HEAVILY ON THE SAME THEME. THE SERIALIZATION IN MAARIV OF THE SHEEHAN FOREIGN POLICY ARTICLE HAS ADDED SUSPICIONS, PARTICULARLY IN THE RIGHT WING CAMP, ABOUT U.S. TACTICS AND INTENTIONS. DESPITE THE HEADLINES, CONFIDENTIAL

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HOWEVER, NEITHER OUR MIDDLE EAST ARMS SALES POLICY NOR SO-CALLED REVELATIONS REGARDING THE POST-WAR NEGOTIATIONS HAVE MUCH IMPACT ON THE BALANCE OF FORCES HERE. THE LINES BETWEEN MODERATES PREPARED TO MAKE TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS AND HARDLINERS OPPOSED TO THEM WERE DRAWN LONG AGO, AND EACH SIDE GRINDS THE LATEST EVENTS INTO ITS PARTICULAR PERCEPTION OF WHAT ISRAEL OUGHT TO DO. IN SUM, THE CURRENT PHASE IS A WAITING PERIOD IN WHICH BOTH SIDES ARE TRYING TO MARSHAL THEIR

FORCES FOR THE INTERNAL SHOWDOWN WHICH LOOMS IN THE FUTURE
OVER THE POSSIBLE CONCESSIONS ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AND THE
WEST BANK.
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